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U. S. Department of Agriculture

WHAT MY CLUB HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM OF OUR COUNTY

A radio talk by Vernon LeRoy Baldwin, Freeborn County, Minn., delivered in the National 4-H Club radio program, Saturday, December 3, 1932, broadcast by a network of 57 stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company.

4-H Club members at home and everywhere:

In order to be real honest, I must confess that a pretty big job has been given me when I am asked to tell you in five minutes what my 4-H Club has contributed to the agricultural program of our county. I know of one state which has a 4-H Club slogan "hop to it." So I will just adopt their slogan for a few minutes and try to finish this job.

4-H Club work is not new in Freeborn County. For many years our County Extension Agents have made club work a part of their program. Each year it has grown until this year we have twenty or more clubs with about 900 members. In nearly every part of our county are 4-H Clubs to be found.

A great deal of live stock is raised on the farms in Freeborn County. So it is logical that 4-H Live Stock Clubs should be organized, and we have Dairy Calf, Pig, Sheep, Baby Beef and Poultry Clubs.

In our Dairy Calf clubs, the calf owned by the club member has often been the first pure bred animal ever owned on that particular farm. In many cases, the pure bred calf owned by the club member has been the beginning of a pure bred herd. Starting an improved dairy herd has also brought about better care of the animals. Most of the herds in our Dairy Herd Improvements Associations are owned by families in which there now are, or formerly were 4-H Club members.

In the swine project, there also have been marked results. Most of our Pig Club members, whether raising one or two pigs, or a litter, try to raise them on clean ground. By this method, and with proper feed, they can produce a 200 pound pig in five or six months. We have learned that it is good pasture together with proper feed, which make the pigs grow. By caring for our pigs this way, they are not held back by parasites or diseases which are often found in hog lots. Swine sanitation is a part of the agricultural program in our county, and both farmers and 4-H Club members practice it. On a Pig Club tour held by our club, we saw an example of how this plan works. At one farm, the club member was raising two pigs. They were about five months old and weighed 190 pounds. They were pastured out in the orchard, where pigs had never been pastured before. The rest of the herd was in the old hog lot, all practically the same age, but weighing between 75 and 90 pounds. The pigs of the main herd had received just as much feed in proportion as the club pigs, but we were convinced that it was the clean ground which made the difference.

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In recent years the poultry flocks of our county have been greatly improved. This past year we had 328 poultry club members. The beginning poultry club members usually start with day-old chicks, but many of the older members now have laying flocks. Each club member tries to follow the direction on feeding given us by our County Extension Agents, and this brings better feeding methods to many farms. In our county we stress two important factors in the poultry industry, feeding and breeding, and my club has helped to carry out this program.

In our live stock club work we have learned that we must raise most of the crops with which to feed our stock. We mix our own feed and thus are able to feed our animals more economically.

But you must not think from what I have said that we have only agricultural clubs in Freeborn county. The 4-H club girls in their homemaking projects are also contributing their part.

Much of the success of 4-H Club work in our county has been due to our state club leaders. 4-H Club members and local club leaders, like myself, have learned a great deal from them at our state 4-H short course at University Farm, at our state fair, and at our leaders' conferences.

This is the first time that the Moses trophy has gone to Minnesota, and I am happy that my work as a club member and leader has helped to bring this about.